

REMARKS

As discussed below, Applicants have incorporated subject matter indicated allowable by the Examiner into original independent claims 22, 29, and 35 to expedite prosecution and to place the present application in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claim 40 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Office Action, page 3. Accordingly, Applicants have amended claim 40 to correct a typographical error without altering the subject matter. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 22, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Begley (US patent 2,917,465). Office Action, pages 3-4. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. However, these rejections are believed to be moot in light of the amendments made to the independent claims. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102.

Cancellation of Claims 1-21

The Examiner acknowledged a typographical error in the restriction requirement stated in the previous Office Action. *See* Current Office Action, page 2. To correct the error, the Examiner grouped claims 29-42 (previously unaddressed by the Examiner) with claims 22-28 in Group II. *See id.* In light of the correction, Applicants have cancelled claims 1-21 (restricted to Group I) without prejudice for possible inclusion in a subsequently filed divisional application.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner stated that “[c]laims 24, 26, 28, 30, 32, 34, 36-38, 40-42 [are] objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.” Office Action, page 4. Applicants graciously acknowledge the Examiner’s indication of allowable subject matter.

Claim Amendments

In view of the allowable subject matter noted above, the Applicants amended claims 22-25, 28-31, 33-38, 40, and 42, and cancelled claims 26, 32, and 41 to expedite prosecution and to place the present application in condition for allowance. Applicants amended independent claims 22, 29, and 35 to incorporate the indicated-allowable subject matter of dependent claims 26, 32, and 41, respectively. Also, Applicants rewrote allowable dependent claims 24, 28, and 36-38 in independent form. In general, Applicants amended the claims to provide for antecedent basis and to correct other drafting errors. The amendments do not add any new matter. Moreover, Applicants note that certain aspects of the original claims are still believed to be

distinguishable over the cited reference and, thus, Applicants may wish to file a continuation application to pursue this subject matter. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of all pending claims 22-25, 27-31, 33-40, and 42.

Conclusion

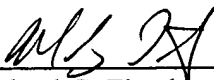
In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, the Applicants respectfully request allowance of the pending claims. If the Examiner believes that a telephonic interview will help speed this application toward issuance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Payment of Fees

Applicants have cancelled four independent claims and rewrote five dependent claims in independent form. Thus, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the requisite fee of \$200.00 to the attached PTO-2038 for the additional independent claim, and any other fees which may be required, to Deposit Account No. 06-1315; Order No. CPCMC:0014/FLE (210349US1).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: December 14, 2004



Michael G. Fletcher
Reg. No. 32,777
FLETCHER YODER
P.O. Box 692289
Houston, TX 77269-2289
(281) 970-4545